

**Minutes of the Public Works Committee
January 15, 2009**

Chair David Swan called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

Committee Members Present: County Board Supervisors David Swan (Chair), Walter Kolb (arrived at 8:35 a.m.), Pamela Meyer, Peter Wolff, John Pledl, and Pauline Jaske. **Absent:** Supervisor Peter Gundrum.

Also Present: Legislative Policy Advisor Ann Olson, Legislative Associate Karen Phillips, Director of Public Works Rich Bolte, Engineering Services Manager Gary Evans, Budget Management Specialist Linda Witkowski, Freeman Reporter Joe Petrie, Business Manager Betsy Crosswaite and Highway Operations Manager Peter Chladil

Approve Minutes of December 4, 2008

MOTION: Jaske moved, second by Pledl, to approve the minutes of December 4, 2008, as amended. Motion carried 5-0.

Kolb arrived at 8:35 a.m.

Correspondence

- Letter from Douglas Simpkin to Supervisor Yerke regarding accidents on Waukesha County roads and winter road maintenance issues and a letter of response from Supervisor Yerke.
- Letter regarding a Public Informational Meeting on December 10, 2008, for Project 2717-04-00 CTH P (Sawyer Road) Bark River Bridge and Approaches.

Executive Committee Report of January 5, 2009

Swan stated that interviews of candidates for the 13th Supervisory District were conducted. The Committee recommended Paul Decker for the position.

Future Agenda Items

- Meet at the Waukesha County Expo Center
- Update from the River Rail Transit Commission
- Update on Public Works Capital Projects

Meeting Approvals

MOTION: Jaske moved, second by Meyer, to approve attendance at the Park and Planning Commission meeting to be held on January 22, 2009, at 1:00 p.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Discuss and Consider Ordinance 163-O-075: First Revision To Laying Out, Relocation And Improvement Of County Trunk Highway Y, Waukesha County Project – Project I.D. 08-2779(15) – Kelsey Road Intersection, City Of Muskego, Waukesha County

MOTION: Wolf moved, second by Jaske, to approve Ordinance 163-O-075.

Evans reviewed the revised right of way acquisitions for the intersection improvement project, which is included as part of a capital project. He referred to the attached amended right-of-way plat for the roundabout intersection that will be constructed at CTH Y and Kelsey Road. Due to some issues with grading and alignment, more land is needed than first anticipated. Bolte added that this acquisition involves the same property owners as the original plan. He stated this project is on track for construction

to begin in the spring. Bolte said it would be the first county-owned roundabout.

Pledl stated he has received many comments against the roundabout initially; however, he is no longer hearing opposition.

Jaske asked how much more money is required for this additional land acquisition. Evans stated it may only be about \$5,000, and said that sufficient funds are included in the project budget to acquire the land covered by this ordinance.

Evans continued to answer questions raised by the Committee members regarding the operational details of roundabouts including the accommodation of trucks, illumination and speed.

Motion carried 6-0.

Discuss and Consider Ordinance 163-O-076: Modify The Transportation Fund 2008 Budget For Additional State And County Highway Maintenance

MOTION: Jaske moved, second by Wolff, to approve Ordinance 163-O-076.

Bolte explained this ordinance to appropriate additional expenditure authority totaling \$890,000 for the Public Works Transportation Fund 2008 budget for both State and County highway maintenance operations costs. This is mainly due to weather conditions creating above average snow and ice removal activity and related costs, including salt, overtime, fuel and materials, in the last quarter of 2008. Bolte added that 2008 was record-breaking with respect to severe and unpredictable weather related events, including flooding and major snowstorms.

Swan asked Chladil, on behalf of the Public Works Committee, to thank his staff for their extraordinary efforts in maintaining the County roads and keeping them safe under the recent extreme weather conditions.

Jaske asked if there is any estimation of what costs are still outstanding. Crosswaite explained they are still working on closing out the December accounting period. There are invoices still coming through. Two outstanding issues include how much revenue is coming from the State, and the amount municipalities will be billed for their salt usage. Crosswaite explained, as outlined in the ordinance, that the contingency fund will be replenished should non-contingency funds become available. Bolte stated he does not anticipate another draw on the contingency fund.

Motion carried 6-0.

Discuss and Consider Ordinance 163-O-077: Repeal And Recreate Waukesha County Code Of Ordinances To Set Fees For Right Of Way Permits

MOTION: Pledl moved, second by Kolb, to approve Ordinance 163-O-077.

Bolte explained this ordinance to increase fees for utility and driveway right of way permits. Olson distributed a handout of the fee schedule outlining the old and new application and inspection permit costs.

Kolb asked what percentage increase is reflected in the proposed changes. Evans stated it is approximately 5% over 2 years, based on the County's costs for labor including time and travel. Bolte

added it includes general overhead such as legal and financial involvement, purchasing, and site inspections. Bolte and Evans explained how the fees are rounded up to the next even dollar amount (no cents).

Jaske asked if staffing efficiencies have been reviewed with respect to the number of workers required to perform a given task. She said she had witnessed ten workers on a culvert project that could have been handled by two or three. Bolte stated they want to do the job in a timely and efficient manner – if four people can accomplish the work sooner than two can, they will put more people on the job in order to finish as soon as possible. He vowed that his staff is always busy, and there is never anyone standing around with nothing to do. She may have witnessed a more complicated job situation, for example, requiring two flagmen, and four or five truck drivers coming and going with materials. Bolte stated it is their goal to be as efficient as possible in every situation.

Motion carried 6-0.

Discuss and Consider Ordinance 163-O-078: Repeal And Recreate Section 15-2 Of The Waukesha County Code Of Ordinances Regarding The Establishment Of Fees For The Waukesha County Department Of Public Works

MOTION: Kolb moved, second by Pledl, to approved Ordinance 163-O-078.

Bolte explained this ordinance would change the Public Works fee setting process to be consistent with that of the Department of Parks & Land Use. Instead of having an ordinance every time to change the code, it moves the fee setting process into the adoption of the budget. The fees would be placed into the budget, so that when the budget is approved, the fees would also be approved. Corporation Counsel has suggested that instead of amending the code each time, the numbers be incorporated into the budget.

Swan requested that the Department do everything possible to keep supervisors informed when including such changes in the budget. Witkowski pointed out that a specific page within the budget book is designated for permit processing (Page 333 in the 2009 Budget Book). Evans stated this ordinance would become effective beginning January 1, 2010.

Meyer asked whether the 2009 budget anticipated these increased fees. Bolte said yes, the adopted budget does include the anticipated increased revenues from the new permit fees.

Motion carried 6-0.

Discuss Winter Road Maintenance and Salt Use Policy

Swan stated this discussion was agendaized to address the concerns brought forth in the aforementioned correspondence from Supervisor Yerke and a constituent. Specifically, Swan requested an explanation of how such letters are responded to by the Public Works Department. How would a County Supervisor know the complaint has been acknowledged?

Bolte explained that specific concerns, such as knocking down a mailbox, are responded to by acknowledging the damage and doing the repair. A copy of the response letter would go to the County Supervisor who was initially involved with the complaint. With more generic types of concerns and general complaints, exchanging letters or phone calls will not change the person's perception and would just engender an argument. For example, a complaint that a specific road was never plowed would not receive a response. Bolte stated he is confident that the Public Works staff is out responding appropriately

to the weather and road conditions. He stated that in terms of strategies, Chladil and his staff have done an excellent job. He said they are a bit more than half way through the salt supply at this point. Bolte said that a water tanker truck leased from Jefferson County will be used for the anti-icing program and will be much more efficient. Anti-icing and pre-wetting strategies are in place in an effort to reduce salt usage. This year, settings on the salt distribution equipment in the trucks have been turned down. Salt is a resource that must be carefully managed. Salt and sand mix is being used in some instances.

Jaske stated that the Public Works staff has done a fantastic job on the roads, and the department should be commended. Kolb agreed, stating the department is doing a tremendous job under the circumstances. He added that there would be no benefit in trying to micromanage this operation; it is more beneficial to allow the drivers to make judgment calls to handle extraordinary conditions. Bolte stated there is a high expectation of service from the public, not only in Waukesha County, but throughout the State.

Swan asked what new technologies are being considered for future use concerning pre-wetting and salt alternatives in colder temperatures. Chladil explained calcium chloride has been used the last few days in pre-wetting because it has a lower freezing temperature. Calcium chloride and salt are being mixed with sand to keep the sand from freezing, providing more traction for vehicles. Chladil said one new technology is beet juice; however, it is very expensive, as are potassium chloride and magnesium chloride. Beet juice is mixed with salt brine or calcium chloride. The beet juice itself does not have de-icing qualities, but it helps everything else stick to the roads.

Jaske asked how many actual complaints the department has received. Chladil stated that he has received maybe about two dozen complaints so far this winter. Many complaints are misdirected and are referred over to the appropriate local municipality. He said that County is responsible only for the "letters and numbers" highways and roads. The biggest complaint is people saying their road has not been plowed. Chladil stated they assure people that every piece of available equipment is out; however there may be breakdowns or other unforeseen issues upon occasion. Bolte stated on average, a plow truck passes any given point on a County highway every two hours.

Meyer expressed that the Public Works staff provides service over and above her expectations. She stated we need to change the mindset of people who expect to drive as usual during a snowstorm. People need to change their driving habits and learn how to drive under adverse weather conditions, or just stay home.

Chladil invited Committee members to a ride-along with one of the plow drivers during a snowstorm, to gain perspective from the driver's standpoint.

Future Meeting Dates

- January 29, 2009

Pledl informed Swan that he would not be present for the January 29 meeting.

MOTION: Jaske moved, second by Wolff to adjourn at 9:50 a.m. Motion carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Wolff
Secretary